

62-Year-Old Page Dairy Going Out Of Business

A&P Curtailment Prompts Decision; Babcock Picks Up Trade, Some Workers

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The Page Dairy Co., which has been operating in Toledo for 62 years, is going out of business at the end of this month, Henry A. Page, president, announced.

Mr. Page said that the decision to close was made at meetings of the board and shareholders Wednesday, and announced to the firm's 50 employees.

The decision to close came about because of reductions in operations by A & P Supermarkets, which account for about half of Page's business, he said. A & P once operated 72 stores in the Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana area served by Page. Mr. Page said he understands it is reducing the number of stores to 29 in the three-state area in a realignment to improve its profitability.

Mr. Page said that the "resultant substantial effect on our sales" would make it difficult for the dairy to continue operating at a profit. "So, rather than operate at a loss, we decided the time has come to bite the bullet," he added.

Babcock Dairy Co., a Toledo-based competitor, has agreed to take over most Page customers, and Mr. Page said Babcock also will hire many Page employees. Babcock now is in the process of determining how many employees it will take on, but he estimated the figure would be about 15 to 20, including route salesmen, delivery, production, and office personnel.

The A & P account will be taken over by Driggs Dairy Farms, Inc., a Toledo-based competitor. Howard Driggs, Jr., said that the addition of A & P, which he called a "substantial account," will result in the hiring of a few more employees by his firm.

Original Site occupied

Mr. Page said that many of the 50 employees of his firm also are eligible for retirement, and a number already informed him that they plan to do so.

Page also operates a distribution center in Mansfield, which employs five persons to distribute milk to a large area of central, eastern, and northern Ohio. Mr. Page said that this center probably will continue in business under Babcock.

Page has been located in the same location at Wade and Knapp streets near the Central Union Terminal since it was founded in April, 1913, by Henry A. Page, Sr.

Mr. Page, Jr., who became general manager in 1937, said that the firm once employed as many as 200 persons, when it also produced and distributed ice cream. The company went out of the ice cream business about seven years ago, after its biggest customer, Kroger supermarkets, built an ice cream plant of its own in the Detroit area.

It has produced milk under private labels for about three dozen customers in the three-state area it serves. Among better known customers were Churchill's, Bischoff's, Dennis, and Jerry's markets in the Toledo area, and Mignano and Broadway markets in Monroe, Mich.

At one time, more than 2,400 farmers in a 50-mile radius of Toledo supplied milk to the dairy for processing.

Brothers Map Future

Mr. Page said that he and a brother, Arnold, who is vice president, both plan to remain in the Toledo area. He said that he will retire from the business world and remain active in civic and fund-raising endeavors, which have occupied a good deal of his time through the years.

Arnold Page plans to pursue a career in mechanical engineering, in which he was educated and worked before joining the family's dairy in 1945.